



SOCIAL SECURITY BOARD

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Bliss Parade | P.O. Box 18 | City of Belmopan, Cayo District, Belize
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE

Re: SELA and SSB jointly host a Disaster Risk Management and Social Protection Focus Workshop

Date: September 26th, 2023

The Social Security Board (SSB) in partnership with the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA) and the Inter-American Conference on Social Security (CISS) facilitated a two-day workshop entitled “Disaster Risk Management with a Social Projection Approach”. This workshop took place on September 18 and 19 at SSB’s headquarters in the city of Belmopan.

In a joint statement issued by SELA and CISS the objective of the workshop was “to build skills and capacities in disaster risk management with a social protection approach for decision makers and technicians of the social protection and risk management system in Belize”. Further, the joint statement conveyed that “the disaster risk reduction paradigm prioritizes prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery as well as the elimination and reduction of risk factors. In this sense, it entails the participation of many additional institutions and sectors than those traditionally associated with the immediate response during disaster crises.”

Delegates who visited Belize for the Disaster Risk Management and Social Protection Focus Workshop were Mr. **Gustavo Herrera**, Coordinador de Desarrollo Social (SELA), Mr. **Sayed Duran**, Analista, Coordinacion de Desarrollo Social Secretaria Permanente (SELA), **Alonso Brenes**, Coordinator of the Network for Social Studies on Disaster Prevention in Latin America and the Caribbean (LA RED), Mr. **Alvaro Velarca**, Secretary-General of the Inter-American Conference on Social Security (CISS), Ms. **Verhonica Zamudio**, PhD, Researcher at the Inter-American Conference on Social Security (CISS), and Ms. **Vanessa Stoehr Linoswki**, Executive Director Projects & Research (CISS). Only Mr. **Omar Bello**, Economic Affairs Officer of the Disaster Assessment Unit at the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean was not physically present for his presentation, doing his presentation via Zoom.

In addition, the Secretary-General of the Inter-American Conference on Social Security (CISS) Mr. Alvaro Velarca, embarked on an ambitious schedule of meetings with government officials from the Office of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Finance, Labour, Local Government, Rural Development, Public Service, Energy & Public Utilities, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Human Development, Social Transportation and Poverty Alleviation to accomplish three themes:

- 1) Convey that visiting workers from Belize who are employed in Mexico can now be affiliated with the IMSS (Mexican Social Security Institute) according to the recent institutional changes in the Mexican Republic.
- 2) Communicate the benefits of the comprehensive care models for people living with HIV.



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- 3) Elaborate that the Safe and Healthy Workplace Environments (ELSSA) is a programme that in a tripartite manner (worker, company, and IMSS), promotes health and well-being within workplaces, as well as the prevention of occupational accidents.

Social Security Board's C.E.O. Mrs. Deborah Ruiz and Mrs. Leticia Vega, General Manager for Policy, Research & Actuarial Services (SSB) accompanied Secretary General Velarca to these working meetings.

Participants from SSB, UNICEF, the Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management – Sustainable Development Unit, Ministry of Human Development, Families, and Indigenous People's Affairs, the Government of Belize, the Ministry of Economic Development, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the World Food Program, and the National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO) attended the two-day workshop.

Overall, the workshop advocated for disaster preparedness mitigation programs and explored the shared experiences of some countries in the region, as well as Belize's own experience, to highlight general best practices that can be adopted in the future.

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End.

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